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# *The MCA Advisory*

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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**Volume 11 Number 5**

**June 2008**

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**Dues:** \$20.00/Year \$35.00/2 years

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## **Coming Events**

**Member's Meeting July 31, 2008**

**Time: 3:00 p.m.**

**Room 316, ANA Convention**



## From the Editor

In our lead article for this issue, Tony Lopez attacks a series of related mysteries that have long published the experts. Michael Hodder thought the 1777 Franklin medal was French; John Adams thought that it was English. Along comes Tony to prove that it is English. Dick Margolis thought that the “Voltaire,” Hume and 1777 Franklin medal were related, as did Chris Eimer. Tony has now proved that they are related. Readers are bound to enjoy this article but, even more, they can learn from it. Good research is a combination of inspiration and hard work: Tony Lopez demonstrates the heights to which a researcher can rise.

Ye editor is looking forward to our meeting in Baltimore on July 31, 2008. Jim Cheevers of the United States Naval Academy Museum is a fine speaker. Our preliminary survey suggests that we will have a record turnout, including both the usual suspects and a good crop of new hands. We look forward to some fine fellowship before and after the meeting.

## Admiral Vernon Project

(by John W. Adams)

No less than 14 authors have previously published on the Vernon series. Most of these authors have been first class numismatists, so one might well wonder whether there is any value yet to be added.

Given that present day cataloguers make frequent mistakes in attributing Vernon medals, the need for a user friendly text is clear. What has been missing is images: with nearly 300 varieties, many of them differing minutely from one to the other, words alone cannot get the job done. To this end, we have assembled high quality images from the major public collections and now lack only five varieties: McG 5, 20A, 31, 107 and 184. The first two are available in a pinch from prior

texts but the last three are nowhere yet to be found. Hopefully, readers of The Advisory can help us to fill in the blanks.

Those of you who read Spanish may be aware that there is another side to the accounts of the battles fought by Vernon, particularly Cartagena. Don Blas, the Spanish commandant, is pictured on Vernon medals as a two-legged supplicant surrendering his sword, when in fact he had but one arm, one leg and one eye--and, notwithstanding, won the aforesaid battle going away: This “omission” in the English texts needs to be addressed.

## Mystery solved? Voltaire, 1777 Franklin, Hume and D'eon medals

(by Tony Lopez)

I first became aware of the suspected connection between three eighteenth century medals, the 1777 Franklin of Philadelphia, (1778) Washington “Voltaire”, and 1776 David Hume medals while reading the Chapter on the 1777 Franklin medal in John W. Adams and Anne Bentley’s *“Comitia Americana”*. Chris Eimer and Richard Margolis had previously noted similarities in the styles of the three medals, and Adams-Bentley note the sunken reverses and identical patterns between the collars and inner rims seen on the three medals.

The significance of the 1777 Franklin and Washington “Voltaire” medals to collectors of American historical medals cannot be understated. Both medals represent the earliest contemporary medallic representations of these two Founding Fathers who played a pivotal role in the creation of the young nation.

Adams-Bentley make a strong argument for the English striking of the 1777 Franklin medal, which had been identified previously as a product of France, most recently by Michael Hodder in the Ford Betts Sale, Part XIV. The Washington “Voltaire” medal is so named because it has long been considered to have been struck in Paris by order of Voltaire. The

David Hume medal is almost certainly of English manufacture based upon the subject matter on the medal. In a recent issue of the *MCA Advisory*, Margolis also includes the Chevalier D'ëon medal with these three.

In order to shed light, a closer examination and comparison of the characteristics of the three medals is in order. My goal was to find some link which definitively connects the pedigree of the 1777 Franklin of Philadelphia, Washington Voltaire, and David Hume medals, and their unknown artists/engravers.

A comparison of the lettering is most revealing. Examining the large lettering in the obverse legends surrounding the busts of all three medals discloses that both the font style and size of the lettering matches. While there is often significant recutting of the lettering seen on these medals, comparing the clear unaltered lettering unveils that it matches in detail, size and style.

### The “Tailed-N”

The most noteworthy similarity in comparing the lettering is the unusual style of the large letter “N”. If you look closely, you will notice a distinctive upper right serif on the letter “N” which has an interesting stylistic curve which angles slightly upward and to the right, sort of like a tail. This unusual “tailed-N” is seen on all three medals.

The “tailed-N” represents a distinctive flourish for the style of lettering used in medal design during this era. An examination of the letter “N” used on other western European medals struck during the mid-late eighteenth century reveals that the upper right serif is almost always a simple flat bar that sits atop the right upright of the letter “N,” particularly on French and English medals. I looked extensively through dozens of catalogs and references that have pictures of medals from this era, and could not find any style of the letter “N” on any medals which even remotely

resemble the “tailed-N” seen on the three medals, with a single exception, the 1777 dated Madame “Chevalier” D'ëon medal noted by Margolis.



While I did not have a high resolution scan of the Chevalier D'ëon medal available to me for this study, from the plate example pictured in the Fearon Spink Commemorative medals reference, there is no question that the medal has the same “tailed-N” seen in the other three medals.

The matching style in the letter “N” alone is not sufficient proof that these medals were struck from the same source. With the matching style alone, there still exists the possibility that the lettering in the medals was created by separate sets of lettering punches of matching style belonging to different die sinkers at different locations.

### The “Damaged E” punch

I dug deeper into the details of the lettering, and believe I have located the conclusive evidence which now ties the three medals together. On the large letter “E’s” which are clear and uncut, there is a distinctive

flaw seen on the upper right inside of the thick upright. This characteristic is commonly seen on the large letters “E” on all three medals.



The only viable explanation for this matching flaw appearing commonly on all three medals is that the punch for the letter “E” used to engrave the original dies was identical for all three medals. These medals obviously share a common pedigree! This tiny matching telltale flaw seen in the letters “E,” a missing portion likely created by a small chip or similar damage to a single “E” lettering punch, should close the debate on the common origin of these three medals.

Again, I do not have an example of the Chevalier D’eon medal to confirm the flawed “E” punch, but given the rarity of the “tailed-N” characteristic, it is safe to say that the D’eon medal is also of common parentage. The D’eon medal does have the large letter “E” on the obverse surrounding legend, so once an example becomes available, it should be fairly simple to confirm whether it shares this important specific detail.

## Matching Busts

When comparing the Washington “Voltaire” medal to the David Hume medal, the

obverse portraits are strikingly similar. Both busts are of Neo-Classical Roman style, both have short cropped hair, a prominent nose with an even more prominent squared bridge of the nose, a not-so prominent chin, and a smooth neck. The relief and relative size of the busts on the obverse also match.

It is at first difficult to compare the three-quarters bust seen on the 1777 Franklin medal to these two other medals, which are in profile. On closer inspection, however, there are indeed some striking similarities between the Franklin bust, and the other two busts. Most notably, the bust of Franklin has the prominent Roman nose with a squared bridge, the weak chin-line, and the smooth neck seen on the Washington and Hume busts. When seen at an angle, much of these similarities come to light, and it becomes evident that this bust was engraved in the same style, and likely by the same artist as the other two medals.



There is one more similarity between the three medals: the talented engraver apparently did not have an accurate portrait of any of the three men, so chose to use creative license in designing the portraits on the medals.

The Washington and Hume busts do not look even remotely like their subjects. The Franklin bust slightly resembles Franklin, but is sufficiently inaccurate that an 1836 inventory of the Massachusetts Historical Society describes this medal as “Full face of Franklin in cap and open-shirt collar-not a likeness.” I choose to defer to their more contemporaneous judgment, and simply state that it is in fact not a likeness of Franklin.

I would be remiss in this examination if I did not make one important point: these three medals, while unsigned and created by an unknown engraver, are beautiful examples of the medal-makers art, created by an exceptionally talented and competent artist. In particular, the detailed three-quarters bust of Benjamin Franklin is an extraordinary artistic accomplishment. The realism and drama revealed in Franklin’s high-relief forward facing medallic portrait is a difficult and skillful undertaking. This is evidenced by the rarity with which contemporary medallic artists chose to use this perspective.

### **Where do the medals come from?**

From the dates and subjects, all four medals were struck during a very short period in history, most likely 1776-1778. Adams-Bentley cite several sources, but conclude that the Franklin medal comes from England. The David Hume medal has always been given British lineage. The Madame “Chevalier” D’eon medal is dated 1777, coinciding with his departure from England, and has also long been considered to be an English striking. Fearon’s *Spinks British Commemorative Medals* lists the D’eon medal, and indicates it was engraved by John Kirk. Fearon also lists a 37mm “unsigned and undated” 1776 medal of Benjamin Franklin, also by John Kirk, but notes that no such medal exists.

I inquired of British historical medal expert Christopher Eimer for his conclusions regarding the attribution to Kirk, and he

replied: “*There is little doubt in my mind that these medals are not the work of the Kirks, as you yourself have surmised. In looking at my book on the Pingos, I cannot see any use of the broken punch, which is one of the key features linking these medals.*”

As stated earlier the Washington “Voltaire” medal has long been considered to be of French manufacture, and attributed to Voltaire, its author. The history of the medal suggests that Benjamin Franklin and Voltaire collaborated on the medal, and had it struck in Paris. This may be in part due to the reverse legend, which is in French and attributed to Voltaire: “Washin Reunit Par Une Rare Assemblage Les Talents Du Guerrier & Les Vertus du Sage” (Washington combines by singular union the talents of a warrior and the virtues of a philosopher.) The obverse legend, however, is in English, extremely unusual for any medal created in France during this era. Was this medal struck in France or England? In Rulau-Fuld’s “*Medallic Portraits of Washington,*” it lists the Washington “Voltaire” medals in various compositions, catalogued as Baker 78 A-D. In their notes, they also state that the medal was struck in Paris. They also indicate that the portrait of Washington may be based upon the likeness of British humanitarian Jeremy Bentham.

Thus, the generally accepted history on these medals places the manufacture of the Washington medal in France, the Hume and D’eon medals in England, and the Franklin medal goes both ways. The characteristics of these four medals match each other, but do not match any of the styles of any of the important die engravers in England, or for that matter France. There is little question now that all four medals come from the same place, but was that place England, France or some other location?



## The Josiah Wedgwood Connection

Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley were creating high quality cameo design basalt and jasperware portrait medallions in England during this period. There exists a number of small Wedgwood - Bentley jasperware cameo portrait medallions of George Washington, identical in style to the Washington bust seen on the Washington “Voltaire” medal. The Washington portrait medallions of this design are listed for sale in a 1779 Wedgwood–Bentley catalogue, and the known examples are from the mid-to-late 1770’s, bearing the “Wedgwood-Bentley” manufacturer’s mark.

Josiah Wedgwood was a supporter of the American cause, but publicly changed positions, as support of the Colonials was controversial and detrimental to his business. A November 16, 1913 New York Times article about a collection of jasperware, which includes the Wedgwood Washington Voltaire Jasperware portrait piece states that “*The most interesting piece among them is Josiah Wedgwood’s portrait (of Washington) the famous medallion which was circulated all over France and England at the time of the revolution. This was made by Wedgwood at the insistence of Voltaire, and as there were no portraits of Washington at that time in England, a classic type of face was selected which seemed to embody the principles for which Washington stood*”.

The article goes on to quote a July 1777 communication between Josiah Wedgwood, and his long time partner Thomas Bentley regarding the Washington “Voltaire” medal: “*My objections to striking medals from the bronze you sent me rather increase. It would be doing no service to the cause of liberty in general, at least so it appears to me, and might hurt us very much individually. Nay, the personage is himself at this time more absolute than any despot in Europe. How then can he be celebrated in such circumstances as the patron of Liberty?*” This same correspondence

is cited in Robin Reilly and George Savage’s “*Wedgwood, the Portrait Medallions*”.

While the Washington Voltaire medal was long believed to have been produced in France, its obvious common pedigree with the other three medals would indicate it is of English manufacture. In Rulau-Fuld, they note that the portrait was based upon British humanitarian Jeremy Bentham, which is another indication it was struck in Britain.

Rulau-Fuld also notes that bronze examples exist struck over a 1797 Cartwheel two-pence, further evidence that the medals not only came from England, but that there were restrikes being made in the late eighteenth century from the dies. Advanced die states of the Franklin medal, and later restrikes of the Washington “Voltaire” medals over coins do indicate that the medals were likely struck later, perhaps at the end of the eighteenth century. Ultimately, with the ties to the other three medals, as well as all of the other evidence, including the correspondence of Wedgwood, it becomes clear that the Washington Voltaire medal was in fact struck in England. One important note: most of the medal references date the Washington “Voltaire” medal to 1778; Wedgwood’s July 1777 correspondence proves that the medals were struck by 1777, and perhaps earlier.

Wedgwood-Bentley manufactured hundreds of different cameo portrait medallions during this period, most of which bear the competent and accurate portrait of their subject matters. They are commonly a white cameo with a blue background, but there are many other varieties including dark basalt portrait medallions. On many of the portrait medallions created by Wedgwood – Bentley during this period you will see a similar style to the busts seen on these three medals, Neo-Classical Roman style, short cropped hair with the ear revealed, prominent noses, weak chin-lines, and smooth necks. In considering matching style, the most noteworthy is revealed



Wedgwood - Bentley Washington Jasperware Portrait Medallion circa 1777; 3 1/4" X 2 3/4"

when looking at the jasperware portrait medallions with three-quarters facing busts, matching the competent exquisite style of the 1777 Franklin medal. The similarities are dramatic. In particular, the three-quarters jasperware medallion portraits attributed to Wedgwood artist John Flaxman demonstrate the work of an extraordinarily skilled artist. Flaxman, considered a noteworthy sculptor and artist, was employed by Wedgwood during this period. There is a Wedgwood-Bentley three-quarters portrait medallion of Captain James Cook attributed to Flaxman which has eyes and other styling startlingly matching those of Franklin in the 1777 medal.

Wedgwood-Bentley portrait medallions from this era are usually marked on their reverse with the manufacturer's name. However, Josiah Wedgwood would not allow his artists to place their mark or any sort of

indicator of the artist anywhere on the pieces. In 1777 Wedgwood wrote to Bentley *"You will see by looking under the shoulder that these heads are modeled by Wm. Hackwood,* (referring to Hackwood's initials being placed at the base of the busts) *but I shall prevent his exposing himself again now that I have found out . . . I will be glad to have your opinion on the subject. Mine will be against any name being placed upon our articles besides W & B (Wedgwood-Bentley)."* Wedgwood prevailed on this issue, and among the thousands of examples and hundreds of styles of their portrait medallions, engravers initials are a great rarity; only Hackwood's initials appear on a very small handful of them.

One of the great mysteries of the four medals being researched here is the fact that an extremely skilled artist failed to take credit for his artwork, as was customary at the time among medal makers who would place their engravers signature somewhere on the dies. Despite the fact that they employed some of the most skilled portrait artists and sculptors of the time, at Wedgwood-Bentley the omission of credits was company policy.

In 1763, Wedgwood visited Matthew Boulton's Soho Mint in Birmingham to see the manufacturing processes. Afterwards, he acquired an engine turning lathe which he had seen there in operation. This piece of equipment was used for cutting repetitive patterns in metal, and would be used in the die-engraving process to make dies for striking coins and medals. Wedgwood familiarized himself with the medal making process, and was able to incorporate medal making equipment into his operations. This lathe is still in operation at the Barlaston Factory. Wedgwood and Boulton maintained a strong association, and were both founding members in 1775 of the Lunar Society, a group of scientists, intellectuals, and industrialists who had met monthly since the mid 1760's on the evening of the full moon.



Wedgwood remained sympathetic to the American cause, although his feelings may have gone underground during the Revolutionary war. Wedgwood was an associate and correspondent of Benjamin Franklin, the subject of one of the medals being researched here, and Franklin was a fellow member of the Lunar Society along with Wedgwood and Boulton. Boulton had known Franklin for many years, first meeting him in 1758 in Birmingham. Franklin attended a number of the meetings of the Lunar Society in Birmingham, and had personally met Wedgwood on a number of occasions.

Wedgwood and Bentley had the political philosophy, personal associates, knowledge and resources, and most important the artistic skills at their disposal to be responsible for striking these important medals. Wedgwood was also well familiar with the medal making process, was a close associate with Matthew Boulton, and purchased and incorporated at least some medal making equipment into his operations. Wedgwood also had a company policy preventing artists from signing their artwork, which explains why these wonderful medals were unsigned. Once you begin to make all of these artistic comparisons, then the fact that Wedgwood referred to “striking medals” in his correspondence regarding the Washington “Voltaire” medal, makes the conclusion obvious (at least, to this author).

There is one conjectural note I would like to add at this time. The Hume and Franklin medals have unusual dates, where the number “1” has been replaced by the letter “J” in the dates, which read as “J776” and “J777” respectively. Could this have been a secret artist’s mark for the Wedgwood artist John Flaxman? While Josiah Bentley refused to allow artists to sign their pieces, he did have his manufacturers mark placed on all of his works. Does the letter “J” indicate Josiah Wedgwood?

One area for serious consideration and research is Wedgwood’s 1777 stated concerns

about the Washington medal, and its controversial and unpopular nature. Was he referring to the jasperware portrait medallion, or the Washington “Voltaire” medal, or both? The Jasperware portrait medallion appears in their 1779 catalog which is surprising given these serious concerns. Sentiments in England certainly did not change and become sympathetic towards the American cause between 1777 and 1779 in the midst of a violent conflict during the Revolutionary War. The listing in the catalog appeared along with hundreds of other offerings of portrait medallions of important historical persons, past and present, all of them simple portraits without any political commentary attached. The portrait alone is not necessarily unpatriotic or offensive, especially considering the fact that it did not actually picture Washington. The reverse of the Washington “Voltaire” medal, however, with its patriotic legends about Washington and his character, as well as the allegorical victorious patriotic images of a military trophy with flags and weapons of war, would certainly be unacceptable within England, if not considered as an act of treason. Given this, I believe that Wedgwood was only referring to concerns about the medallic Washington “Voltaire medal” in his July 1777 correspondence, and not the portrait medallion, further tying him to these four medals, and explaining the inclusion of the portrait medallion in his 1779 catalog.

Whether the medals were actually created at the Wedgwood-Bentley Etruria works in Stoke-on Kent, Staffordshire, England, or were produced by them at some other location may never be determined. I do not think one can rule out the possibility that these may actually have been struck secretly at the Soho mint, given Wedgwood’s close friendship and association with Matthew Boulton, as well as Boulton’s ability to easily create these medals, along with some help from the Wedgwood-Bentley artists. The fact that Wedgwood’s “no artist’s signature” rule was

enforced on the medals may be an indication that the medals were not struck at the Soho Mint.

The subject matter of the medals in England was extremely controversial, perhaps dangerous and unlawful, so they must have been struck clandestinely. There is too much evidence tying these medals to Wedgwood-Bentley to dismiss, despite the fact that the medals are unsigned and were struck secretly. As the war with the Americans heated up, so did the risk of sympathizing with their cause, and it stands to reason that the production of these medals ceased. This may explain the great rarity of most of these medals, especially the Franklin Medal.

Two hundred and thirty years later, have the secrets behind the striking of a series of four controversial medals from England been uncovered? It appears so. While the specific details as to exactly where, and exactly who did what, may never be determined, strong evidence of the association of Josiah Wedgwood with the creation of these medals is impossible to overlook. There is little question that once Wedgwood is tied to the Washington "Voltaire" medal, and that medal is tied to the other three medals, much of the mystery is solved. For me, the strongest evidence is the artistic merit of the medals, which excludes almost anyone other than Wedgwood personnel. These medals were struck in England, likely during 1776-1777, and were designed by Wedgwood-Bentley artists with the support of Josiah Wedgwood, and possibly his partner Thomas Bentley.

Given these conclusions, I propose that this group of medals be heretofore referred to as the "Wedgwood Historical Medals". Only time and further research will decide whether this new designation is accepted by exonumismatic researchers and the medal collecting community.



PHILADELPHIA (1777 Franklin) THE (Wash Voltaire) GENERAL (Wash Voltaire) Er (Wash Voltaire) HUM E (David Hume)

**Above** The obverse dies of the 1777 Franklin, Washington Voltaire, and David Hume medal all have a matching flaw or chip seen on the upper right inside of the thicker vertical upright portion of the capital letter "E". This matching flaw is significant and can only be attributed to this letter on the dies being accomplished with the same identical punch. This should be definitive evidence that all three medals came from the same source.

**Below** The unusual font of the capital letter "N" seen on the obverse and reverse of the 1777 Franklin and obverse of the Washington Voltaire medals matches in style. Note that the upper right serif rises upwards at a similar angle, and other details match. While this does not show the exact same punches, it indicates that they are from the same style of letter punches. (Hume medal does not have the letter "N")



**Look at the eyes** - Seen at left is a close-up of the 1777 Franklin medal. In the center is an original wax bas-relief of Capt. James Cook hand done by Wedgwood artist John Flaxman to create a jasperware portrait medallion (and turned to match the angles of the Franklin bust.) The finished product, circa 1779, is seen at right. Note the style and structure of the nose and the browline, as well as the hollow eyes.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear John,

I enjoyed your latest Advisory and want to respond to a couple of things but lack the email addresses to do so.

I would like to talk to John Sallay about being an interviewer.

I would like to talk to Max Spiegel about a thought I have for his Nini research.

Thank you very much.

All the best,

Harry Waterson

[e-mails supplied—ed.]

Dear John

Attached is a go-round commentary that brings to the fore the history of the two medals made for the completion of the Erie Canal (in yesterday's NYT crossword puzzle a clue was: "Started in Rome in 1817," and the answer was ERIE CANAL).

I think this might make a nice subject for the MCA Advisory--not concentrating on uninformed cataloguers (although you can certainly mention me in that context if you wish---still don't know who did the Stack's catalogue saying this), but on the history of the medal itself. This is a rather foundational piece of medallic Americana, is No. 1 in the Hibler-Kappen book, etc.

Also, as far as I know, this represents C.C. Wright's very first medal with wide distribution.

Dave B(owers)

Hi!

I never did think that NY ordered any of the medals or that they were used in the celebration. I did contemplate that perhaps

Thomason created his medal first (unless the 1827 date is the date of publication of Thomason's medal) and that it was used by the Americans for its design.

- Even now, it would be interesting to know when the Thomason medal was first advertised or made available. If it was significantly (a month or two or three) after the Wright medal, then it would seem it was copied from the Wright medal. If the Thomason medal was advertised first, then he would take precedence.

Dave B

Dave,

I think DTA's point is that the Brits were good at copying American products, and that prior generations of numismatists have been guilty of thinking that Americans were not the originators of designs and products.

To follow your lead, perhaps a check of Harrington Manville's excerpts of British periodicals would be fruitful in this regard? I don't know how far this publication goes?

Vicken Yegparian

Hi!

My main point is that at least a few people interested in medals are not sure which came first. It does not stretch credulity to suggest that the accomplished Thomason, who contemplated subjects ranging from the Bible to volcanoes to illustrate on medals, might have read about the Erie Canal and its tradition and created the elegant motifs. If he copied them from C.C. Wright, that is okay too. It would be very interesting to see which reached PRINT first.

An analogous situation might be drawn to the Washington / Lafayette counter stamps of 1824. Everybody and his brother, including me, attributed the counter stamp to C.C. Wright. Then at COAC 1999 John Kleeberg cited chapter and verse that Joseph Lewis, a

name unfamiliar to me, did the work.  
"Conventional wisdom" changed overnight.

I believe that we all, or at least some of us, are continually learning new things about coins, medals, tokens, and paper money.

Dave B.

Hi everybody:

Yes, I too would love to see that. I am the one who put Thomason first, and when, in the manuscript review phase, Joe Levine argued that he thought Wright's came first, I stuck to my guns. Joe couldn't remember why he felt that way (with any kind of a citation) and I had found the documents below, which state the Wright medal was not ready in time for celebration day. Looking back through my papers, I can't find support for why I insisted Thomason's came first (though I was sure of myself at the time), so I have to concede the error.

We are all poorly informed catalogers, I guess, because the Minot cataloguer stated "Maltby Pedetreau" struck the medals. This spelling is widely seen in numismatic publications, but the correct spelling is Pelletreau. (See examples of his hallmarks in attached link.) [http://www.925-1000.com/americansilver\\_P.html](http://www.925-1000.com/americansilver_P.html)

The extract below gives Robertson's report on the art done for the celebration. This indicates a firm date of 1825 for the existence of the Wright medal. I'd love to see a firm date on the Thomason!

Katie

P.S. "I love the word "immixtion" below.

## **MEMOIR,**

**PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF A  
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON  
COUNCIL**

**OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,  
AND PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR OF**

**THE CITY,  
AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE  
COMPLETION  
OF THE NEW YORK CANALS.**

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**BY CADWALLADER D. COLDEN.**

---

**PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE  
CORPORATION OF NEW YORK, BY W.A.  
DAVIS. 1825.**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE FINE ARTS**

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**REPORT  
OF  
ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, ESQ.**

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At the request of the Honorable RICHARD RIKER, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, for the Grand Canal Celebration at New York, November the fourth, eighteen hundred and twenty-five, the Subscriber, in behalf of the Department of Fine Arts,

**RESPECTFULLY  
REPORTS,**

That, having been charged, (by the Committee of Arrangements appointed by the Corporation of New York, on occasion of the Grand Canal Celebration,) with superintending the execution of such works of art as this most interesting event required, he offers the following statement of what has been effected by the respective Artists, &c. employed, and the works they have accomplished, chiefly with a view to explain or illustrate the account of the Grand Canal Celebration, its history, commencement, and final termination, consummated at New York, the fourth of November, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-five; All of which is respectfully submitted,

**ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON.**

*No. 79, Liberty Street, New York.*

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## BADGE.

The first of my operations was to make an appropriate Device, intended for a Medal, to be worn by the guests of the Corporation on the joyful day; but *time not permitting the execution of such a work as would be worthy of the occasion, it was resolved to have this Device engraved by a first-rate artist, and postpone the Medal to be executed at leisure*: it was therefore engraved on copper by Mr. Asher B. Durand, and printed on satin by Mr. Elias Wade, jun., and thus, as a Badge, was worn by the ladies and gentlemen on the Celebration Day.

This device will be found printed on the same plate with the Invitation Ticket. It represents the visit of Pan to Neptune; Pan seated in a canoe, loaded with the products of our fields, forests, and Mediterranean Seas, from Lake Erie, being piloted by an aboriginal native of the western forests, with a brotherly affection embraces Neptune, who, seated in his naval car, and attended by a Triton winding his conch, reciprocates the embrace; and in this attitude, with arms interlocked, Neptune returns the visit to Sandy Hook, by accompanying his brother Pan to his native woods on the shores of Lake Erie.

The inscription on the Device is – "Alliance of Neptune and Pan," above the figures, and "Union of Erie with the Atlantic," beneath.

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*Plate 30 – Corporation Badge Plate*  
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## INVITATION CARD.

Our next operation was the INVITATION CARD to the Guests, who were invited to accompany the Mayor, Recorder, and Common Council, to witness the ceremonies, and the immixtion of the mild waters of Lake Erie with the briny floods of the Atlantic, at Sandy Hook.

The Device for this Card was designed and engraved by Mr. Asher B. Durand, upon a steel die; the application or impression from this die, on the copperplate, was made by the very ingenious Mr. Cyrus Durand, and the lettering executed by Mr. Joseph Perkins; thus exhibiting the admirable effect produced by this union of first-rate talents.

This Device represents the Arms of the State, that single handed accomplished this mighty work, in a

section of time so short as to annihilate all comparison. The Supporters are Liberty and Justice. The Shield exhibits a rising Sun. The Crest is a full fledged young Eagle, on a terrestrial sphere, and expanding his pennons for flight. In the back ground, on the left hand of Liberty, is the City of New York, as it is approached from the Narrows, at the Southern extremity of the State; and on the right hand of Justice are seen some of the wonderful series of Locks, at Lockport, near the Western termination of the Canal.

### *The inscription of the Card is*

"The Corporation of the City of New York, invite -----  
----- to participate with them in the celebrations on the Completion of the Erie Canal, to meet at the City Hall, on Friday, the fourth day of November, at eight o'clock, and proceed with them, in the steam-boat, to Sandy Hook.

"Grand Canal commenced 4 July 1817, completed 26 October 1825."

{This plate will be found printed on the same page as the badge, and beneath it.}

DURAND AND WRIGHT.

Thus in seven year, four months, and twenty-three days was achieved this great work.

## BALL TICKET.

The next pictorial document in chronological series, is the TICKET for the Grand Canal Celebration Ball, given by the military and citizens of New York, which fete closed the Celebration in this City. In the centre of the Ticket is an elliptical frame, in which is a view of a Canal, with Locks, and boats towed by horses; in the distance is seen a Lake or the Ocean, with a Lighthouse upon a point of land.

This Picture is supported by civil and military trophies, and beneath is an Urn pouring forth a stream of water into a Lake below; above the elliptical frame a flood of radiated light shoots upwards from a luminary behind this picture and frame; in the midst of the rays are the words "Canal Celebration Ball, Nov. 7, 1825." At the bottom of the Ticket are the words – "Given by the Militia Officers and Citizens of New York." {We are sorry it is not in our power to say who is the composer or engraver of this plate; we shall only remark, that whoever he or they were, they needed not to have been ashamed of their work; the engraver at least has robbed himself of one-half of his recompence by this omission.



Since writing the above, upon a more strict inquiry we have been enabled to ascertain the composer, engraver, and printer, to be Mr. Samuel Maverick, Engraver and Copperplate Printer, 73, Liberty Street. These above mentioned circumstances show why an artist ought to at least put his name upon his work, as he otherwise must do himself great injustice.}

## MEDAL.

The Corporation of the City having voted that a MEDAL should be struck, in commemoration of the great event of opening the navigable communication between Lake Erie and the Ocean, the arrival in our harbor of a loaded flotilla, charged with the productions of the immense regions, surrounding the wide Western Lakes, and the measureless water-courses of our

### *Plate 31 – Ball Ticket*

Northern Continent the same general idea of a Device, was adopted, as on that of the Badge worn by the Corporation guests on the celebration day.

On the face of the Medal is represented Neptune, who, with brotherly cordiality, returns Pan's visit to the Ocean; the motto – "UNION OF ERIE WITH THE ATLANTIC." Under this emblem are the initials of the artists, R. DEL., W. Sc. On the reverse is the Armorial Bearings of the State, the sole agent in the great work; on the right of which are appropriately represented Canal Aqueducts and Locks; and on the left is a view of the Harbor and City of New York; the motto "ERIE CANAL COMM. 4 JULY 1817, COMP. 26 OCT. 1825:" the contracted words in this motto in full are "COMMENCED," and "COMPLETED." Underneath the above is the sculptor's name "C.C. WRIGHT"; and below are the words in small Roman capitals "PRESENTED BY THE CITY OF N. YORK."

## ARTISTS.

The Medal was engraved by Mr. Charles C. Wright, (of the firm of A. B. and C. Durand, Wright and Co., corner of Broadway and Canal Street.) The lettering by Mr. Richard Trested, Engraver and Die Sinker, 68, William Street, upon dies made by Mr. William Williams, Worker in Iron and Steel, corner of Liberty and Green Streets. **The Medals, themselves, were most elegantly impressed by Mr. Maltby Pelletreau, (of the firm of Pelletreau, Bennett, and Cooke, 170,**

**Broadway,) at their Gold and Silver Manufactory, No. 12, Rose Street, by means of his very powerful and exquisitely adjusted screw Press.** The superlative beauty of the Medal (to every one who has seen it) renders it perfectly unnecessary for us to say more, than that all pronounce it to be a *chef d'oeuvre* of the fine arts; each artist, in his respective department, having manifested himself to be an accomplished master of his art; which, by this combination of talent has aided in producing a work of such superior excellence as to rival the best masters of the old world. We must, however, in justice to the sculptor decide, that although each has crowned himself with a never fading wreath of fame, that a ray of superior lustre reflects upon the brow of the artist who engraved the dies.

## THE BOX.

When it had been determined by the City Authorities that a Medal should be struck, the Committee of the Corporation, (Aldermen King and Davis,) were charged, amongst their other commissions to Buffalo, with procuring a sufficient quantity of the most curious woods, such as birdseye, and curled maple, red cedar, &c. the produce of the western forests, for making Boxes to inclose the Medal. This was procured, and deposited in a canoe, now in the City Hall, made by the aboriginal red men, on the shores of Lake Superior; and embarked on board the "Seneca Chief," the first Canal boat from the Lakes, which navigated the length of waters from Erie to the Ocean. We may here take notice, that the logs of cedar were procured by Mr. Miles, son of Capt. Thaddeus Joy, of Buffalo, from an island in Lake Erie. The Boxes are made of these woods, which inclose the Medals presented to the invited guests. The Boxes for the semi-metal and silver Medals are likewise made of these very curious woods. On the inside of the lid is the crest of the City Arms; with the inscription "Presented by the City of New York;" and on the innerside of the bottom "This Box was made from a piece of Wood, brought from Erie in the first Canal-boat, the Seneca Chief." The gold Medals are inclosed in elegant square red morocco cases.

## ARTISTS.

The makers of the curious wood boxes were Mr. Daniel Karr, turner, 222, William Street; and Mr. Duncan Phyfe, Murray Street. The maker of the

morocco cases for the gold Medals was Mr. Robert Tanner, Morrocco Case Maker, 67, Liberty Street.

**[Great work Katie Jaeger!—ed.]**

Dear John,

I have heard about some of your work, commendable to say the least. I am a coin collector or hoarder, just love the D\*\*\* things. I love the history behind them as much as the coin themselves. I just heard about, "Comitia Americana and Related Medals: Underappreciated Monuments to Our Heritage" by John W. Adams and Anne E. Bentley." I want a copy. I need a copy. I am willing to pay.

I would like to invite you to our discussion, If you go to eBay, lick on "Community" upper left. Then on the left side click on "Discussion Groups" Then on the right hand column near the bottom, under "category specific discussions" Click on "Coins and Paper Money" Sign in if not. Look for the thread "Origins of the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal: Comitia Americana" Read it and if you are signed in, I am interested in anything you have to say.

I am J.D. eBay ID jdinaa  
Dear John,

I found your e-mail addresses on the MCA Contacts web page. Someone suggested that you may be able to help me. I have an American calendar medal made by Anderson & Sons of Westfield Massachusetts for the years 1957-1984 (on the back are two companies, The Colonial Fund, Inc. and Gas Industries Fund, Inc.). I'm trying to find out if it is collectible and, if so, who'd want it and how much it might be worth. When I did a search on the web, I found the following article (please see the link below) in which there is a picture of an almost identical calendar medal (this one has the Girl Scouts of America on the back) and there was mention of a calendar medals cataloguer named Jim Sweeney. So far,

I have had no luck finding Mr. Sweeney, and both the ANA and ANS have not been able to help me (and neither have a few local dealers I've contacted by e-mail in the Greater Boston area). I was wondering if you could possible point me in the right direction. And, my apologies for this e-mail if this is not the type of assistance or information you provide.  
<http://ansmagazine.com/spring05/cabinet.html>

Thanks in advance either way.

John.  
johnjust@juno.com

**Dear John:**

**I appreciate the plug in the latest MCA advisory. For future reference, my e-mail address is [jlevine968@aol.com](mailto:jlevine968@aol.com) rather than [jlevine768@aol.com](mailto:jlevine768@aol.com).**

**Joe Levine**

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**What would you see highlighted in MCA publications?**

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